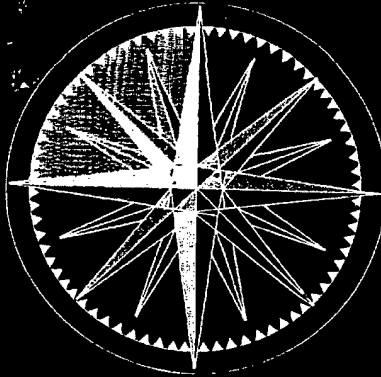


TOP SECRET



NLJ - 141-015-4-1-7

21 August 1964

EO 12958 6.1(c) > 25Yrs



[Handwritten signature]
78

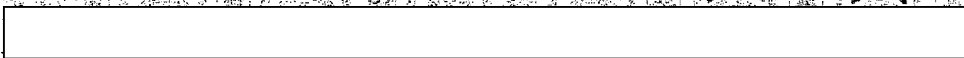
SPECIAL REPORT

COMMUNIST CHINA IMPROVING BORDER TRANSPORT CAPABILITIES

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: OCT. 2002

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

EO 12958 6.1(c) > 25Yrs

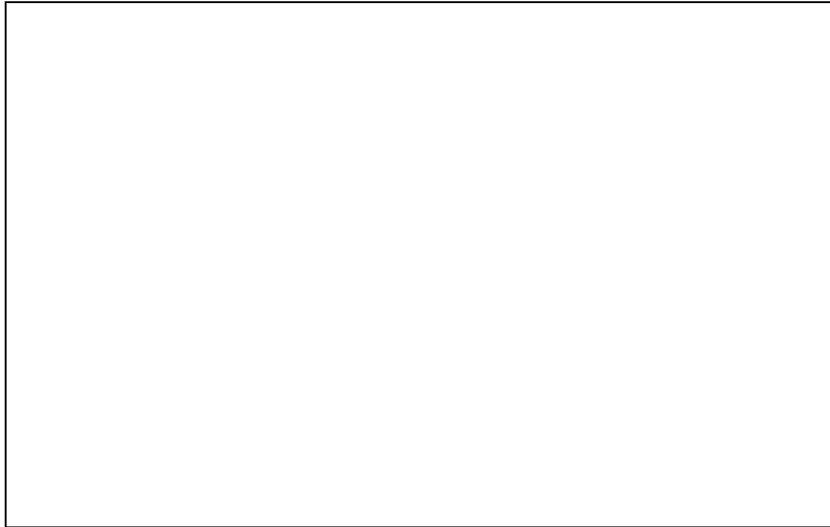


~~TOP SECRET~~

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic
downgrading and declassification

3

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)



EO 12958 6.1(c)>25Yrs

~~TOP SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

21 August 1964

COMMUNIST CHINA IMPROVING BORDER TRANSPORT CAPABILITIES

Communist China is continuing to construct transport routes along its southern border even though existing roads can already support military campaigns larger in scale than that against India in 1962.

A decade of steady work has completed well-developed networks of roads to the central Tibetan and southeast Asian borders, and a small number of roads to the western Tibetan border. These roads are being maintained and in some cases improved.

Three major new routes are under construction. The Sino-Nepalese Road will provide a connection with India through Nepal. The remaining two projects--a rail connection between Chungking and Kunming and construction of a southern road shortening the length of the Szechwan-Tibet road--will improve access from the main parts of China to Kunming and Lhasa, the primary staging points for southeast Asia and central Tibet.

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)
(S)

The Central Tibetan Border

Most land traffic from China proper to Lhasa presently runs over the 1,300-mile Tsinghai-Tibet and 1,200-mile Szechwan-Tibet roads. Nevertheless the relatively small capacity of trucks, the altitude and ruggedness of the terrain, and the frequent obstructions from weather still keep Lhasa relatively inaccessible from the main parts of China. The Chinese started to survey for a railroad from Tsinghai to Tibet in 1956 but stopped after preliminary surveys were completed in 1961.

Aside from this plan, major improvements in access to Lhasa do not appear feasible. The route between Szechwan and Tibet is being shortened by building

a road between Tung-o-lo and Pangta which will cut the distance to Lhasa by almost 155 miles. Priority for this project is not high, however.

The alternate route will require a suspension bridge--not yet started--over the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and further improvements at the western end.

Once past Lhasa, a network of roads runs to six locations within Tibet along the border from central Nepal to central North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The capacity of this network is estimated to exceed that of the two major access routes to Lhasa.

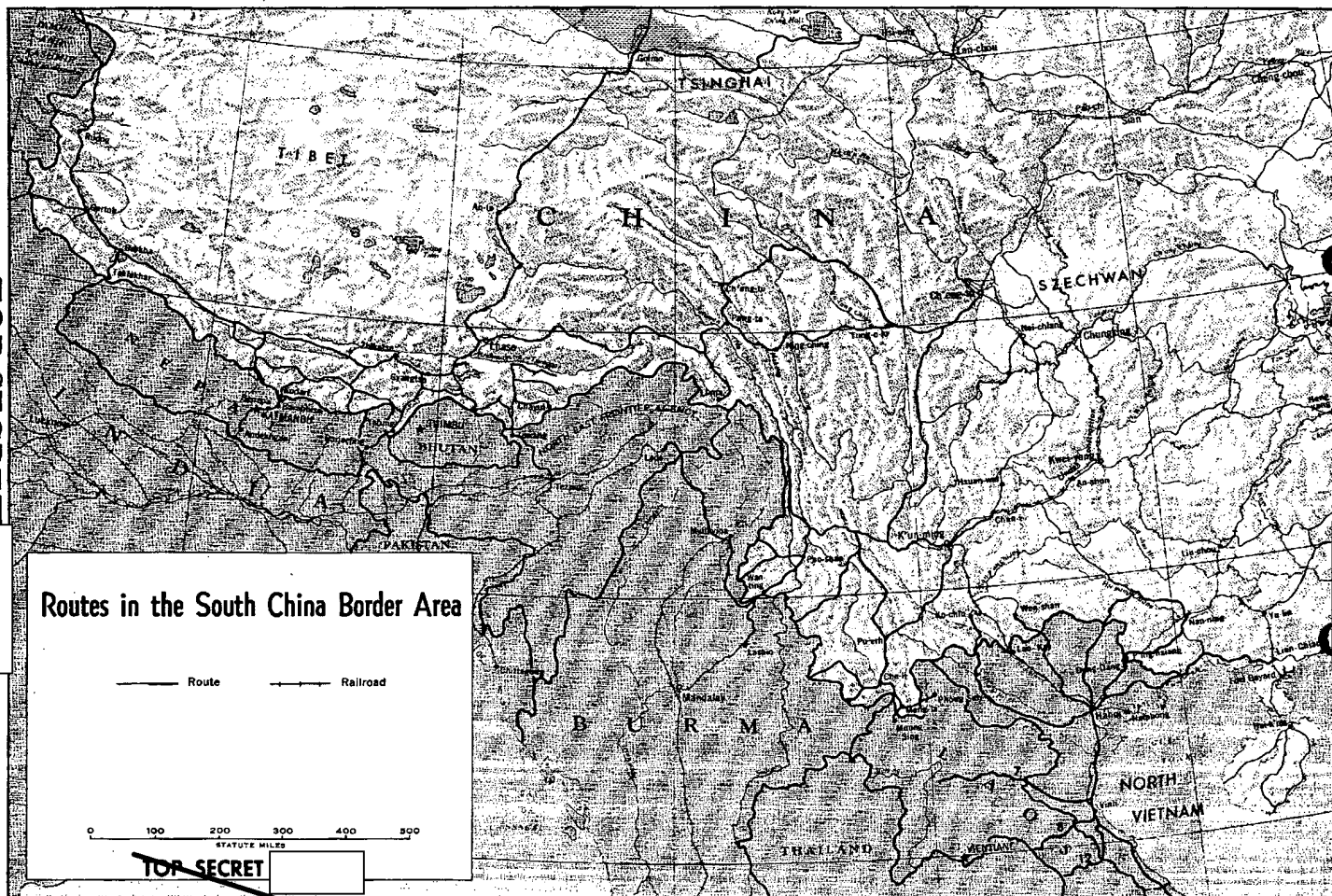
1

~~TOP SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

~~TOP SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)
(S)

The almost-completed Lhasa-Kodari section of the Lhasa-Katmandu Road will add a seventh spoke to this network. More significantly, however, the Kodari-Katmandu section will give the Chinese a third road--Kodari-Katmandu-Amlekhganj--to India.

The central Tibetan network now connects with India through Yatung opposite Sikkim and through Towang in western NEFA.

Within Nepal, a 12-mile road already exists from Katmandu to Banepa. The Banepa to Kodari section is under construction by Nepalese laborers and Chinese technicians, supplied with some heavy equipment sent from Calcutta. Chinese engineers are also working on the Barahbise-Kodari section of the road in Nepal. The Chinese reportedly plan to have the entire section of the road within Nepal usable by jeep-size vehicles by the end of 1964. They are deferring construction of major bridges, drainage facilities, and embankment reinforcements to attain this goal.

The Southeast Asian Border

The Chinese road network leading to the southeast Asian countries starts at Kunming, which lies in a mountainous area still reached with difficulty

from the main parts of China. From the Chinese interior, Kunming is served by many roads, but the main supply line is by standard-gauge railroad from Canton and Hengyang to Dong Dang, North Vietnam, then by narrow gauge to Hanoi, Lao Kay and Kunming. The North Vietnamese railroad from Dong Dang to Lao Kay has probably carried as much Chinese as Vietnamese freight in recent years, even though it is an expensive and inconvenient route for Chinese shipments. For example, freight originating only a few hundred miles north of Kunming must be moved over a thousand miles, in the process being transshipped from water to land as well as standard- to narrow-gauge railroad.

This situation will be changed when the railroad from Chungking through Kweiyang to Kunming is completed. Work was suspended during the economically catastrophic year of 1961, but there are some reports that it has resumed. The many bridges and tunnels required by the rugged terrain complicate railroad construction. [redacted] reports suggest, however, that this line has high military priority, that work is progressing, and that it could be opened to traffic in a year or two.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

There is no evidence that the Chinese are adding roads to the existing network from Kunming to the Burmese, Laotian, and North Vietnamese borders or constructing roads within those countries. They are, however, making significant improvements to existing routes,

~~TOP SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

such as construction of the bridge over the Mekong at Cheli. This bridge, the piers and abutments of which were completed in the spring of 1962, will be a reinforced concrete structure and should be completed by about mid-October 1964. Furthermore, in Burma the Chinese are ready to start construction on the Kunlong bridge over the Salween River. Both these bridges are projects of several years' standing and do not suggest a crash construction program. The Cheli bridge will replace fords which the Chinese press claims are usable throughout the year. The Kunlong bridge is not particularly strategic since it lies on an eastward extension from the Burma road. Only a trail exists between the bridge site and the Chinese border.

At present, the Chinese road network to the Burmese and

Laotian borders is far more extensive than road nets across the borders. In Burma, only the Burma Road connects with the Chinese network. The only connection in Laos is the short road terminating at Phong Saly in the northern tip of that country.

In contrast, North Vietnam has at least five road and two railroad connections. Nonmilitary traffic does not depend on the road connections but on the railroads from Kunming and Pinghsiang to Hanoi or the sea lanes to Haiphong. However, in the event of a large increase in military traffic, the Chinese could reach Hanoi by rail and then fan out over the Hanoi-Vinh railroad and over routes 1, 7, 8, 12, and 6 to reach every part of North Vietnam as well as roads leading to South Vietnam and northern, central, and southern Laos. [REDACTED]

EO 12958 6.1(c)>25Yrs

* * *

□

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)